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Nectarius

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(*Nechtarios*), Patriarch ([../cathen/11549a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11549a.htm)) of Constantinople, (381-397), died 27 Sept, 397, eleventh bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)) of that city since Metrophanes, and may be counted its first patriarch. He came from Tarsus of a senatorial family ([../cathen/05782a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05782a.htm)) and was praetor at Constantinople at the time of the second general council (381). When St. Gregory Nazianzen ([../cathen/07010b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07010b.htm)) resigned his occupation of that see the people called for Nectarius to succeed him and their choice as ratified by the Council (Socrates ([../cathen/14118b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14118b.htm)), *Church History*, Book V ([../fathers/26015.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26015.htm))), before August, 381. Sozomen ([../cathen/14165c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14165c.htm)) (*Church History* VII.8 ([../fathers/26027.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26027.htm))) adds that Nectorius, about to return to Tarsus ([../cathen/14461b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14461b.htm)), asked Diodorus, Bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)) of Tarsus ([../cathen/14461b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14461b.htm)), if he could carry any letters for him. Diodorus, who saw that his visitor was the most suitable person ([../cathen/11726a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm)) to become Bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)) of Constantinople, persuaded Meletius, Bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)) of Antioch ([../cathen/01570a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01570a.htm)), to add his name to the list of candidates presented by the council to the emperor. The emperor then to every one's surprise, chose Nectarius, who was not yet baptized ([../cathen/02258b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02258b.htm)), and in neophyte's ([../cathen/10742a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10742a.htm)) robe he was consecrated ([../cathen/04276a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04276a.htm)) bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)). Tillemont ([../cathen/14724b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14724b.htm)) (*Mémoires*, IX, 486) doubts ([../cathen/05141a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05141a.htm)) this story. Soon after Nectarius' election the Council passed the famous third canon giving Constantinople rank immediately after Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13164a.htm)). A man of no very great power, Nectarius had an uneventful reign with which St. Gregory ([../cathen/07010b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07010b.htm)) was not altogether pleased ("Ep." 88, 91, 151, etc; Tillemont ([../cathen/14724b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14724b.htm)), *op. cit.*, IX, 488). Suspected of concessions to the Novatians ([../cathen/11138a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11138a.htm)) (Socrates ([../cathen/14118b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14118b.htm)), V.10 ([../fathers/26015.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26015.htm)); Sozomen ([../cathen/14165c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14165c.htm)), VII.12 ([../fathers/26027.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26027.htm))), he made none to the Arians ([../cathen/01707c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01707c.htm)), who in 388 burnt his house (Socrates ([../cathen/14118b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14118b.htm)), V.13 ([../fathers/26015.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/26015.htm))). Balsamon ([../cathen/02226b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02226b.htm)) says that in 394 he held a synod ([../cathen/14388a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14388a.htm)) at Constantinople which decreed

(../cathen/04670a.htm) that no bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm) should be deposed (../cathen/04737b.htm) without the consent (../cathen/04283a.htm) of several other bishops (../cathen/02581b.htm) of the same province (../cathen/12514a.htm) (Harduin, I, 955). The most important event, however, is that, according to Socrates (../cathen/14118b.htm) (V.19 (../fathers/26015.htm)) and Sozomen (../cathen/14165c.htm) (VII.16 (../fathers/26017.htm)), as a result of a public scandal (../cathen/13506d.htm) Nectarius abolished the discipline (../cathen/05030a.htm) of public penance and the office of penitentiary hitherto held by a priest (../cathen/12406a.htm) of his diocese (../cathen/05001a.htm). The incident is important for the history of Penance. Nectarius preached a sermon (../cathen/07448a.htm) about the martyr (../cathen/09736b.htm) Theodore still extant (P.G. XXXIX, 1821-40, Nilles (../cathen/11078a.htm) "Kalendarium manuale", II, 96-100). He was succeeded by St. John Chrysostom (../cathen/08452b.htm) and appears as St. Nectarius in the Orthodox Menaion (../cathen/10177b.htm) for 11 October (Nilles (../cathen/11078a.htm), *op. cit.* I, 300; "Acta SS". May, II, 421).

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